



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES
A Healthcare Service Agency

Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

Patricia A. Rehmer, MSN
Commissioner

Memorandum:

TO: Public Health Committee

FROM: Commissioner Patricia Rehmer, MSN, DMHAS

DATE: March 4, 2015

SUBJECT: Written Testimony on House Bill 5912

Good Afternoon Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee. I am Commissioner Patricia Rehmer of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), and I am writing today to address Proposed H.B. No. 5912 AN ACT CONCERNING TRAINING IN MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PERSONNEL.

DMHAS is very supportive of all efforts to educate the community about mental illness which can help to dispel myths, break down barriers to treatment and end the stigma and discrimination that individuals with psychiatric disabilities face every day.

DMHAS currently has a contract with Wheeler Clinic to facilitate Mental Health First Aid Training. Wheeler Clinic currently has capacity to train approximately 150 individuals a year. In addition to Wheeler Clinic there are other private non-profit agencies that employ individuals that are certified to provide the Mental Health First Aid Training. Connecticut currently has 56 individuals "certified" as Mental Health First Aid trainers.

Trainings are scheduled frequently throughout the year and trainers are also available to teach this course as requested. While trainings offered by Wheeler Clinic are offered free of charge to participants utilizing DMHAS funding there are some costs associated Mental Health First Aid training. These costs can vary depending on a number of conditions, including trainer fees, space fees, and materials. When the training is offered entities must often pass the associated costs of the training on to participants.

DMHAS would be willing to work with Wheeler clinic to facilitate the trainings, but wanted to make you aware of the costs associated with widespread implementation of this endeavor.